THE LOCH NESS ANIMAL

BY

Dr. A. C. OUDEMANS,
M. Z. S., M. Ornith. S., Hon. M. Entom. S., &c. of the Netherlands.
Author of "The Great Sea Serpent, &c".

BANGOR

LATE E. J. BRILL, LTD.
PUBLISHERS AND PRINTERS.
LEYDEN 1934.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
COPYRIGHT 1934
BY DR. A. C. OUDEMANS.

With great interest I have perused the articles on the Loch Ness Animal in the *Illustrated London News* for Nov. 11th, 1933, and Jan. 6th and 13th, 1934; in *The Times* for Dec. 9th, 11th, 14th, and 21st, 1933 and Jan. 4th, 1934, and in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* for Jan. 6th, 1934.

In publishing such articles those Journals and Periodicals have contributed more to the knowledge of the "Great Unknown" than those zoologists who, by their "explanations", have only succeeded in making the subject ridiculous.

Intentionally I write "Animal", not "Monster", for the Loch Ness Animal is not a "Monster", i. e. a dreadful unknown beast. Nor is it a "Huge Newt", for, firstly, a newt has no long neck, and cannot undulate vertically, and secondly, the Sea, from where the Animal is said to have entered Loch Ness, does not harbour Amphibians. Neither is it a Reptile of the *Plesiosaurus*-Tribe, for, though it is true, that such an animal may have been able to bend its long neck in all directions, like a Swan, the structure of its trunk must have been so firm, that it was practically inflexible; certainly not vertically flexible. It is built on a mechanical principle: the trunk is the part to which all the muscles of the powerfully developed flippers, four in number, are attached. The same is the case in Birds, whose enormous flying-muscles are fastened to their trunks.

Then what *is* it? Well, it is nothing but a Sea-Serpent.

I hear you ask: So you believe in its existence? I do, and so does Commander Gould. Both of us have made a thorough study of all that has been written on the subject. We only differ in our determination of its place in the System of Nature. There are more people who believe in its existence: first, those who occasionally saw the animal

in question; secondly, a few who have read our books; most people, however, are not convinced, notwithstanding the large number of reports, and our arguments. Many zoologists remain incredulous, because "not a bone, not a tooth, not a shred of skin has ever come into the hands of a zoologist", as if this were a proof of its non-existence. They are so incredulous, that, even if any one could produce a photograph taken by himself, he would be looked at with a suspicious eye.

Still stronger: Two zoologists, both Fellows of the Zoological Society, London, Mr. E. G. B. Meade-Waldo and the late Mr. M. J. Nicoll, while sailing in the Yacht "*Valhalla*" not far from Parahiba (most eastern point of South America), saw a Sea-Serpent. To the members of that Society, they read a paper on what they had seen. It is to be found in the Proceedings of the Society for 1906, p. 719 sqq. It was of no use. Thé "zoologists" do not even believe their own colleagues!

I regret having to take exception to the opinion of Prof. Richard Owen. In 1848 the Officers of the *Daedalus* reported the sight of a Sea-Serpent, whose total length they estimated at about a hundred feet. It had a mane extending from its head all down the medial line of its back. Some days after the reports of the "*Daedalus*" (*post*) were published, a nobleman, whose name is not mentioned, wrote to Prof. Owen, asking him for his views about the animal seen by the Officers of the "*Daedalus*". The answer of Prof. Owen appeared in the "*Times*" for November 11, 1848. It is far too long to be quoted here, but the conclusion the author comes to is: that the animal was most probably a large sea-elephant.

Now the greatest length of a sea-elephant is 27 feet, of which, when the animal is swimming, less than half is visible; moreover it has no mane. The Mentor of the Anatomists of those days, a second Cuvier, arguing: an

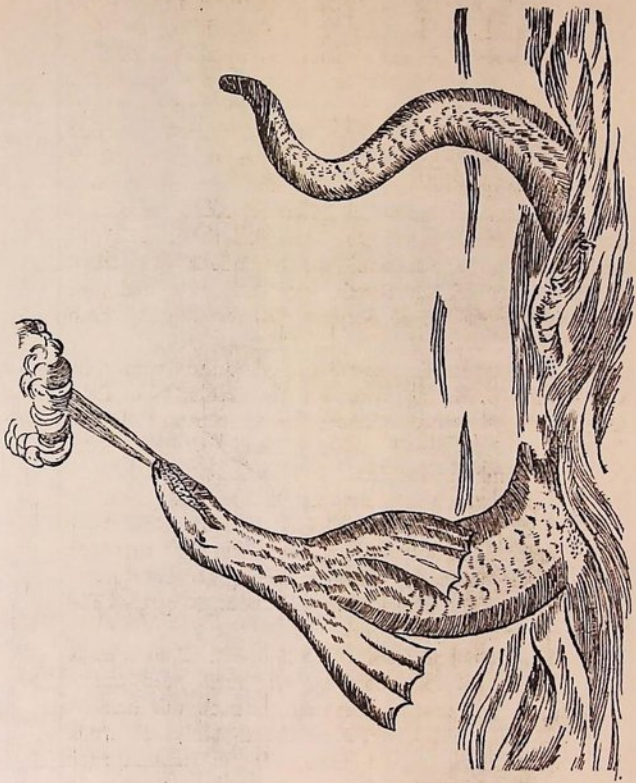

Fig. 1. — The Sea-Serpent, as seen by Hans Egede, and drawn by Bing. Copied from the map in Paul Egede's work: Continuation, &c. 1741.

animal of such dimensions, unknown to me, does not exist (there are more zoologists of this opinion!), deemed null and void the taxations of Naval Officers, who will hardly ever make mistakes in estimating the dimensions of objects floating on the surface of the sea, whether it be a ship, a mast, a log of wood, or the enormous stem of the giant weed *Macrocystis*. He had better have said: "the animal was undoubtedly of the seal-tribe, but Pinnipeds of a length of, say, 100 feet are unknown to me". But this frank avowal of his ignorance could, of course, not flow from his professoral pen! And the result of his entirely wrong "explanation" was the undeserved discredit of the Officers of The Royal Navy. And the question of the existence of the Sea-Serpent was, for the umpteenth time, left open.

Still more deprecating, even offensive to the Commander and Officers of the "*Osborne*", are the "remarks" of Prof. Owen on the reports of the animal seen from that ship. Such "Scientists" lower the high standing of the Royal Navy, and their opinion retards the development of Science.

My book deals with more than 150 reports. These are followed by 22 "explanations" (of which the majority are worse than ridiculous) and by the conclusions to which I came after comparing and considering the contents of the reports. These conclusions fill about 80 pages. The most interesting facts are briefly:

The Sea-Serpent is from 18 to 200 feet, at an average 100 feet long. It has a comparatively small head, which, however, is somewhat broader than the neck; this increases in size towards the trunk. Near the shoulders the trunk is the bulkiest part of the animal. Its long muscular tail is somewhat thinner than the trunk and tapering to the end. At the shoulders there are two huge flippers, and at the end of the trunk two smaller ones, all like those of a sea-lion. Its head also resembles that of the sea-lion.

Fig. 2. — The Sea-Serpent, as seen and delineated by Governor Benstrup.
Copied from Pontoppidan's work on the History of Norway, Chapt. VIII. § 7. 1751.
Notice the mane!

Fig. 3. — The Sea-Serpent, as seen by the Officers of the Daedalus.
Copied from the Illustrated London News for Oct. 28th, 1848.
Notice the mane!

Its whiskers are like those of a seal, a sea-lion, &c. Two brilliant, light-reflecting eyes. On the neck there is a long mane like that of a horse, but coarser; a shorter mane runs all down the medial line of the back. This mane is often compared with seaweed, or kelp. Ears are never mentioned (Fig. 6).

The lateral flexibility is comparatively small; the animal can bend its body in the form of an U, an S, or even an O (fig. 1). Its vertical flexibility, however, is astonishing; its undulations, amounting to twenty "humps", are well-known (fig. 2).

As it has whiskers and a mane, the whole body must be hairy; in water the skin shines. As it "blows like a whale", its warm breath condenses in the cold air (fig. 1), and so the animal has lungs, and is warm-blooded.

At times its speed is astonishing, either by means of vertical undulations, or by the use of its flippers; in the latter case the whole body is quite straight (fig. 3). It may remain under water a long time (seals are known to remain submerged for three hours). It may lie perfectly still, stretched on the surface keeping afloat by means of its flippers. According to some reports the animal may lie quite still, with the fore part of its body "on the rocks", or "on the white sandy beach".

It is not for the first time that Loch Ness enjoys the honour of a visit of a Sea-Serpent. About fifty years ago a large creature was stated to have been seen in the Loch on several occasions. Thirty five years ago a resident of Foyers saw the „monster" floating about the Loch. Over twenty years ago a Sea-Serpent appeared, even on land, near Fort Augustus. A few years ago a party of Inverness anglers came across an individual while rowing in a boat. On all these occasions the visit of a Sea-Serpent was not of long duration; it left the Loch, probably the same way it entered it.

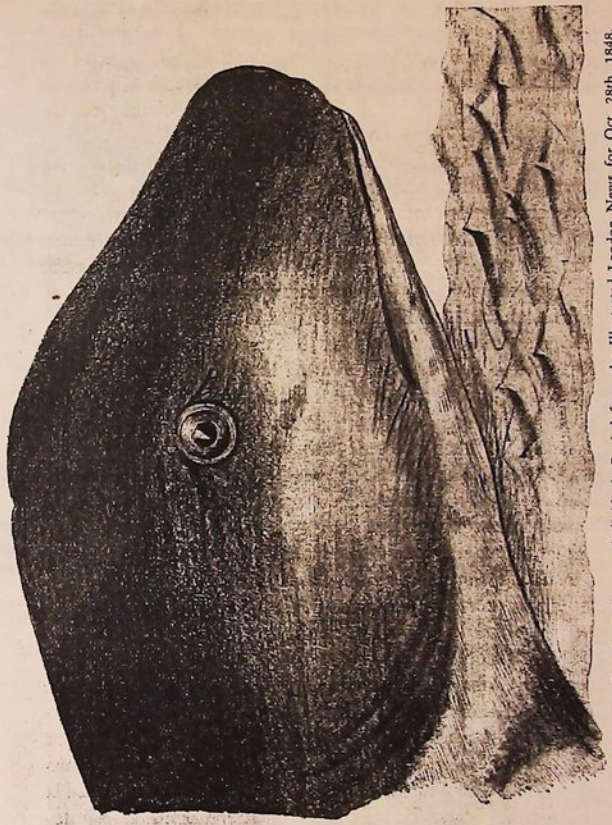

Fig. 4. — The head of the same individual. Copied from the Illustrated London News for Oct. 28th, 1848. It is drawn too short and without whiskers!

The recent appearance of the animal in Loch Ness, of course has revived my interest in the Sea-Serpent. Commander Gould presumes that the animal has entered the Loch, up the River Ness during a spate. Miss M'Donald has actually witnessed this entrance, at about half past 4 in an afternoon in March 1933. So most probably on the 13th, or the 27th of that month.

The Sea-Serpent, when in shallow waters, most probably feeds on cuttles, squids, lobsters, crabs, etc.; in the open sea certainly on fish, but also on seals and sea-lions (report 36 of my book), dolphins, porpoises, grampuses (reports 56, 97 and 124) (fig. 5), of course biting these animals into pieces, not swallowing them whole.

The animal of Loch Ness is said to be perfectly harmless, feeding most probably on salmon; — that is, as long as it has food enough! But what will it be, when food is scarce? For the Loch is comparatively void of fish. So it is not at all improbable that it has been seen with a lamb in its mouth. If this be true, Olaus Magnus (1555!) is rehabilitated; a passage in his book runs as follows: — "it comes... on summernights... to devour calves, lambs and hogs."

The animal, at least the male, has a mane like that of a horse. If the female also has a mane, it will most probably be shorter. Mrs. Mac Lennan, in June, 1933, off the pier-head at Drumnadrochit, actually saw "a mane like that of a horse". When the animal holds its head a few feet above the surface of the water, the hairs of the mane stick together, and may form one or more protuberances near or on its head. This accounts for the "frill", observed by Miss Janet Fraser and ten other witnesses from "Half-Way" Tea House, Aultsaye, Sept. 22nd, 1933, 1 A. M. and for the crest on the head of the individual, photographed by Mr. R. K. Wilson on April 19th 1933.

As all *Carnivora* and *Pinnipedia* are possessed of light-

reflecting eyes, it is no wonder, that several witnesses should have compared the eyes of the animal to motor-lamps. Also in former reports the eyes are described as "brilliant and flaming" (p. 105), as "glistening like those of a cat" (report 91), and "like a burning fire (report 5, p. 119).

That two animals were seen 15 to 20 miles apart and at opposite ends of the Loch, on January 2nd, 1934, is not a proof of there being two individuals, as this animal

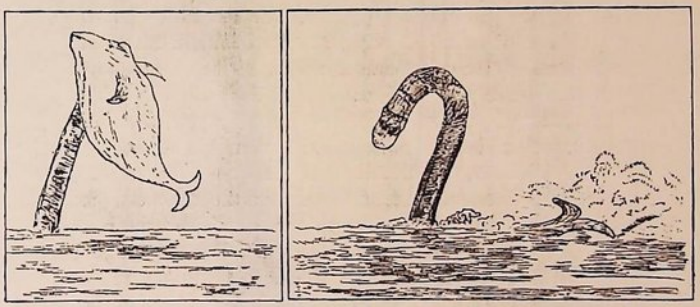

Fig. 5. — The Sea-Serpent, seizing a whale of the smaller kind, probably a porpoise, by its right pectoral fin; as seen by Capt. Davison. The figure on the right shows the tail of the escaping whale. Copied from "*Nature*" for Nov. 18th, 1880.

may easily have gone that distance within an hour. Yet, the presence of two individuals, a male and a female, or a mother with its young is not improbable.

A hairy animal, of course, may rest, in fact, may make a little trip, on land; so the reports, stating that the Loch Ness Animal has been seen on land more than ten times, according to the investigations of Mr. G. H. Davis, the special artist of the *Illustrated London News*, are certainly not untrustworthy.

The Sea-Serpent is reported to have whiskers (p. 103

and report 130 of my book). They are actually delineated by Mr. J. Mackintosh Bell (p. 217 and 219 of Gould's book). The observer has done well to draw what he saw as accurately as possible; he did not see the long tail, most probably owing to the rippling of the water, caused by the diving animal. Is it not remarkable, that the sketch on p. 219 (fig. 7) resembles mine (fig. 6)?

Mr. Arthur Grant even delineated and described the animal (a young one!) (fig. 8) in terms, as if he had read my book and seen the sketches of the most probable outlines of the Sea-Serpent (fig. 6). The foremost "hump" of the animal in his drawing at once betrays a Mammal; it is formed by the two shoulder-blades, as it is in horses, dogs, cats &c., when these animals rest on their fore limbs. The fore limbs of the Loch-animal are long flippers, like those of a sea-lion; in the position, in which it is represented by the observer, the five long fingers, united by a web, were spread on the ground, and, in the darkness, not distinguished from it. The much shorter hind flippers have five toes, of which the first and the fifth are longest, all united by a web and, like the fingers, spread on the ground. The extremity of the tail was most probably turned away from the observer.

In my work I presume that the Sea-Serpent may be a huge unknown Pinniped. Well, Miss M'Donald saw it moving in River Ness "by a series of leaps", and Mr. G. Spicer on land "in a series of jerks", just as seals, sea-bears, sea-lions do. Mr. Arthur Grant, of Drumnadrochit, who had an opportunity of seeing the whole animal in a road, about eight miles from Inverness, writes in a letter to Count Bentinck, at Overveen, near Haarlem, "Its movement was very like that of a seal's. The leaping, heaping, movement being most pronounced". A *Plesiosaurus* whould never have been able to move in this way, supposing it should have been thrown on land.

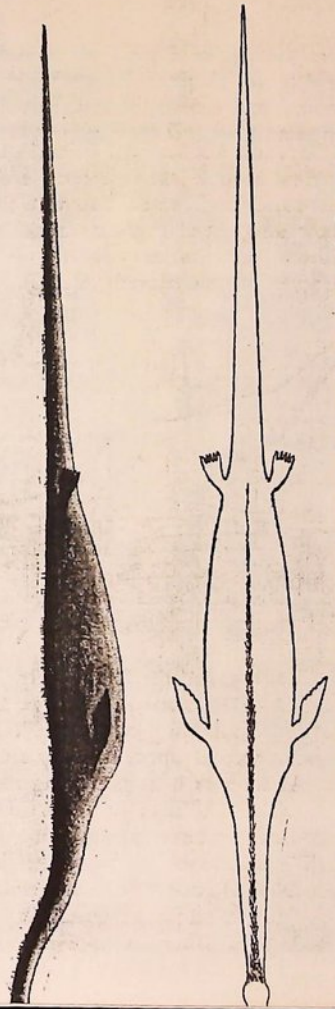

Fig. 6. — Sketches of the most probable outlines of the Sea-Serpent. Copied from my book p. 516. Notice the whiskers and the mane in the lower figure!

If the reader should think that a long-tailed Pinniped does not exist, I may remind him of the fact that fishes with lungs and quadrupeds with gills were regarded as impossible creatures until they were discovered.

As the Sea-Serpent is a sea-animal, quantities of sea-water get into its stomach and intestinal canal every day. Its constitution is based on a sea-diet; so that the question arises as to how long the Loch Ness animal will live in such quite different circumstances.

If we read attentively the reports of August, 1872, by

Fig. 8. — Sketch of the animal by Mr. Arthur Grant, who saw it on the road, at 1 A. M., Jan. 5th, 1934, by the light of his motor-cycle lamp. Presented to me by the author.

the Rev. John Macrae, and the Rev. David Twopeny (my book, p. 322—328, Gould's book, p. 141—149), we must come to the following conclusion. If the animal swims slowly with vertical undulations, it seems to use its flippers too. As soon as it stops moving them, all the humps disappear together; the animal sinks. Consequently, the animal is heavier than water, and will sink when dead. We had better not be too tender-hearted, for, if the Loch Ness Animal should die in its element, it will be lost to Science for ever. So let us take this rare chance to possess our selves of it.

Of late months the Loch Ness Animal has repeatedly been called "prehistoric". I should say, this term is not applicable in this case; the animal had better be looked upon as a comparatively new species, formed by mutation.

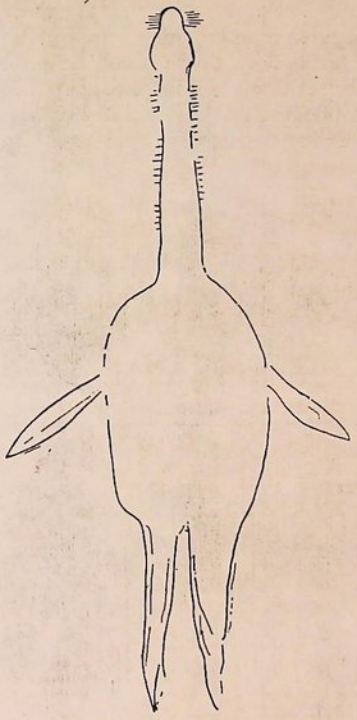

Fig. 7. — Sea-Serpent, swimming under water, as seen by Mr. J. Mackintosh Bell. Copied, with permission of the author, from Mr. R. T. Gould's book, p. 219.

The Animal has got into Loch Ness up the River Ness. It is of course possible, and even probable, that some day it will try to escape, having been confined too long in a cage of only 24 miles long and nearly a mile broad.

May the M. P's. for Scotland use their influence with the Government of Great Britain to prevent the escape of this exceedingly rare animal, in the hope that it may one day be the most precious possession of the Royal Scottish Museum at Edinburgh, which unquestionably has the greatest right to it.